

Pre-Visit Guide

Grade 7

Overview: A Frontier Fort

In preparation for a visit to Fort McKavett, students will learn about the fort's construction, the important work of troops stationed at frontier forts, the impact of westward expansion on Native Americans, and the succession of fort control during and after the Civil War.

Social Studies TEKS

(6) History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues shaped the history of Texas from Reconstruction through the beginning of the 20th century. The student is expected to:

(A) identify significant individuals, events, and issues from Reconstruction through the beginning of the 20th century, including the factors leading to the expansion of the Texas frontier, the effects of westward expansion on American Indians, the buffalo soldiers, and Quanah Parker.

(10) Geography. The student understands the effects of the interaction between humans and the environment in Texas during the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. The student is expected to:

(A) identify ways in which Texans have adapted to the environment.

(21) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas;

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;

(C) organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps;

(D) identify points of view from the historical context surrounding an event and the frame of reference that influenced the participants;

(F) identify bias in written, oral, and visual material.



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Materials

- Historical images
- Texas frontier quotes resource
- *On the Road to Fort McKavett* primary source materials
- KWL graphic organizer

Vocabulary

- **frontier:** lands along the edge of the settled part of a country
- **migration:** moving from one place to another

Historical Context

Before Texas became a state in 1845, settled lands in Texas were limited to the coast, east Texas, and land grant settlements in central and south Texas. All of the western lands were dominated by Native American peoples, most notably Lipan Apaches and Comanches.

By the late 1840s, white settlers were pushing the line of settlement further west. Americans began moving west from the settled eastern states, across the prairie territories, and toward the western territories such as California and Colorado. In 1848, this migration was further fueled by the California Gold Rush. Thousands of settlers took to the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails to cross the continent. Two roads from San Antonio to El Paso, the Upper and Lower Emigrant Roads, took settlers through west Texas.

In early 1852, the U.S. Army established Fort McKavett, west of Fort Mason and approximately 181 miles from San Antonio on the Upper Road. Soldiers stationed at the fort were responsible for providing safe escort to travelers, mail carriers, and wagon trains heading west into frontier territory.

In the 1800s, immigrants from the United States, Mexico, and Europe poured into frontier territory, threatening tribal hunting grounds and buffalo herds. Native groups raided livestock and settlements to slow the loss of their land. In the 1850s, in response to the tribal attacks and in order to increase safety for travelers heading west, the U.S. military established forts like Fort McKavett throughout west Texas. Native American tribes remaining in Texas, such as the Comanche and Lipan Apaches, lost as many as half of their population due to hunting lands being blocked by forts and settlements, professional hunters and settlers decreasing the buffalo herds, and deaths caused by diseases brought by European settlers.

After battling starvation and disease for years and losing most of their supplies and horses in battles with the U. S. Army, Native American resistance on the frontier came to an end as a result of the Red River War of 1874-1875. Remaining native groups were forced to move to reservations near Fort Sill in present-day Oklahoma.

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Although combat was a small part of the frontier soldier's life, Fort McKavett troops participated in several major Indian campaigns including Mackenzie's and Shafter's raids into Mexico, and the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon during the Red River War.

Activity: Views of the Texas Frontier

20 minutes

Display or distribute the **1850 map of Texas**. Point out the settled lands in the east and the open prairies of the west including the "Apaches Farones" and the "Range of the Comanches" territories.

Display or distribute the **Texas frontier quotes resource**. Give students time to skim the text to identify and define any unknown words. As a class, identify the speakers and each speaker's intended audience. Ask students to analyze why the speakers' life experiences influenced their views of the frontier.

Activity: Frontier Settlement and Its Impact on Native Peoples

25 minutes

Distribute or display the **image of Comanches** on the reservation at Fort Sill. Have students complete the **National Archive photo analysis worksheet**. Point out the Library of Congress citation that gives information about the photo. Discuss responses.

As an extension, have students write a personal narrative reaction to the photo or a fictional narrative from the photo subjects' point of view.

Primary Source Activity: On the Road to Fort McKavett

25 minutes

Context: The Civil War had a dramatic impact on the fort system. Control of the forts changed hands and basic maintenance of the fort buildings ceased. Four companies from the 35th Infantry joined the 4th Cavalry at Fort McKavett in 1868, re-establishing federal control of the fort. U.S. troops stationed there would focus on rebuilding the fort for the next 10 years.

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In this activity, students will work in small groups using two primary source documents and a reference historical timeline to answer questions about the route from San Antonio to Fort McKavett, as traveled by the 35th U.S. Army Infantry.

Divide students into small groups. Display or distribute **Letter from U.S. Army Headquarters 1870 and the transcription, Route Marched Map and Enlargement**, and **Frontier Forts Timeline**.

Have students work together to find and record the following information:

- **Name the four major stops on the route between San Antonio and Fort McKavett.**
[Boerne, Fredericksburg, Cold Sp's, Fort Mason]
- **Who was in command of the troops marching this route?**
[Captain J. H. Hopkins]
- **What was the purpose of the letter written by the U.S. Army headquarters in 1870?**
[To inform the governor of Texas that U.S. military forces, not state authorities, are responsible for preserving peace on the frontier.]
- **Fort McKavett was built near which river?**
[San Saba River]
- **Look closely at the magnified section of the map. List at least two details that are noted along the route.**
[condition of the road, availability of resources such as water, wood]
- **Why would additional information noted on a map be a helpful addition to a traveler?**
[Details about landmarks, available resources, difficult/easy passage areas etc. would better prepare a traveler to this area.]
- **What is the distance in miles between San Antonio and Fort McKavett?**
[181 miles]
- **You have just completed an activity using primary sources. What challenges did you have in using, understanding, or interpreting this kind of resource?**
[Answers will vary.]

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Assessment

Evaluate student participation and printouts for completeness and understanding.

Take-Home Extension

Tell students to create a **KWL Chart** to take home. Have them complete the “What I **K**now” and “What I **W**ant to Know” columns about Fort McKavett. After completing all pre-visit preparations and the on-site field trip, have students complete the “What I **L**earned” column for learning assessment.

Additional Resources & Extensions

The Portal to Texas History

<https://texashistory.unt.edu>

The Handbook of Texas Online

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook>

Evolution of the Texas Rangers, The American Civil War

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/lobbyexhibits/ranger-civil>

Oregon-California Trails Association

<http://southern-trails.org/trail-map/newtrailmap>

Texas Beyond History by University of Texas “Timeline of Texas and the Western Frontier”

<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/forts/36-44.html>

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Activity Quotes: Views of the Texas Frontier

These outposts are connected by a road, now in considerable use, which passes by Forts McKavett, Chadbourne, and Phantom Hill. A line of settlements will soon follow, and the Indians will then be confined to the great desert planes, which can furnish them with little game and, probably, no cultivated food. Starvation will compel submission or emigration, and this great district will become open to peaceable occupation.

Frederick Law Olmsted 1857

Olmsted, Frederick Law. *Journey through Texas, or, A saddle-trip on the southwestern frontier : with a statistical appendix*. New York: 1857, p202. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu.
texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph2407/m1/2/?q=fort%20mckavett (Accessed February 17, 2018).

A long time ago this land belonged to our fathers; but when I go up to the river I see camps of soldiers here on its bank. These soldiers cut down my timber; they kill my buffalo; and when I see that, my heart feels like bursting; I feel sorry.

Santana, Chief of the Kiowas 1867

Santana, Chief of the Kiowas, 1867. *U.S. Bureau of Ethnography Annual Report*, 17th, 1895–96.
<http://www.smithsoniansource.org/display/primarysource/viewdetails.aspx?PrimarySourceId=1018> (Accessed November 12, 2017).

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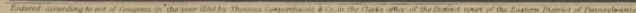
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Map of Texas from the most recent authorities., map, ca. 1850, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu; crediting University of Texas at Arlington Library. texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph50225/m1/1/?q=apache (Accessed November 18, 2017).



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Activity Image: Frontier Settlement and Its Impact on Native Peoples

Soule, William S, photographer. Ta-Her-Ye-Qua-Hip or Horse-Backs Camp. No-Co-Nie. Comanches / W.S. Soule, photo. Fort Sill, I.T. Fort Sill Oklahoma, ca. 1873. Mar. 22. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006675508/>. (Accessed November 18, 2017.)



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National Archives Graphic Organizer: Frontier Settlement and Its Impact on Native Peoples

Analyze a Photograph

Meet the photo.

Quickly scan the photo. What do you notice first?

Type of photo (check all that apply):

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portrait | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Aerial/Satellite | <input type="checkbox"/> Action | <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Panoramic | <input type="checkbox"/> Posed | <input type="checkbox"/> Candid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary | <input type="checkbox"/> Selfie | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | |

Is there a caption? ☐ yes ☐ no

Observe its parts.

List the people, objects and activities you see.

PEOPLE

OBJECTS

ACTIVITIES

Write one sentence summarizing this photo.

Try to make sense of it.

Answer as best you can. The caption, if available, may help.

Who took this photo?

Where is it from?

When is it from?

What was happening at the time in history this photo was taken?

Why was it taken? List evidence from the photo or your knowledge about the photographer that led you to your conclusion.

Use it as historical evidence.

What did you find out from this photo that you might not learn anywhere else?

What other documents, photos, or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?



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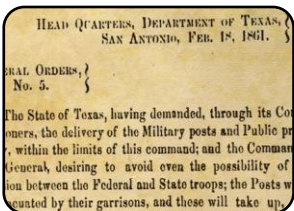
Primary Source Activity: Frontier Fort Timeline



1855

- **Fort McKavett Established**

- The U.S. Army established Fort McKavett on the San Saba River along the Upper Road from San Antonio.



1861

- **U.S. Soldiers Evacuate Forts**

- Having voted to secede from the United States, Texas demanded that the U.S. Army surrender all of its property, including the forts. On February 18, 1861, Gen. Twiggs ordered all U.S. soldiers to evacuate Texas.



1861-1863

- **State of Texas Takes Control**

- Texas seized control over all frontier forts and supplies. In the 1861 "Act to provide for the protection of the frontier," the state allowed for the recruitment of local volunteers to serve as troops of armed minutemen.



1863

- **Confederates Take Charge**

- Texas convinced the Confederacy to take over the expense of border defense in December 1863. Soon after, the Confederate Army reassigned nearly half of the Frontier Regiment to defend the Texas coast.



1866-1868

- **U.S. Army Re-establishes Control of the Forts**

- After a rise in Native American attacks in the west, the U.S. Army once again patrolled the western frontier from the forts. U.S. troops arrived at Fort McKavett in 1868.

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Primary Source Activity: Letter from U.S. Army Headquarters, 1870

Courtesy of Fort McKavett State Historic Site.

Headquarters of the Army,
Adjutant General's Office,
Washington July 23, 1870.
To the Commanding Officer
Department of Texas
Through Headquarters Military Division of the South,
Louisville, Kentucky.
Sir:
In accordance with instructions from
the President, the General of the Army directs that
you inform the Governor of Texas, - in connection with
an Act passed by the Legislature of that State,
entitled "An Act to provide for the protection
of the frontier" - that the Authorities of the State of
Texas, will not be permitted to make war upon
the Indians, but that the Military Authorities of
the United States will, to the extent of their
ability, preserve the peace of the frontier.
You will please acknowledge receipt
and report action to this Office.
Very Respectfully,
Your Obedient Servant

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Primary Source Activity: Transcription of U.S. Army Headquarters Letter

*Headquarters of the Army
Adjutant General's Office
Washington July 23, 1870*

*To the Commanding Officer
Department of Texas
Through Headquarters Military Division of the South.
Louisville, Kentucky.*

Sir.

In accordance with instructions from the President, the General of the Army directs that you inform the Governor of Texas, in connection with an act passed by the Legislature of that State, entitled "An act to provide for the protection of the frontier"—that the authorities of the State of Texas, will not be permitted to make war on the Indians, but that the military authorities of the United States will, to the extent of their ability, preserve the peace of the frontier.

You will please acknowledge receipt and report action to this office.

*Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant*

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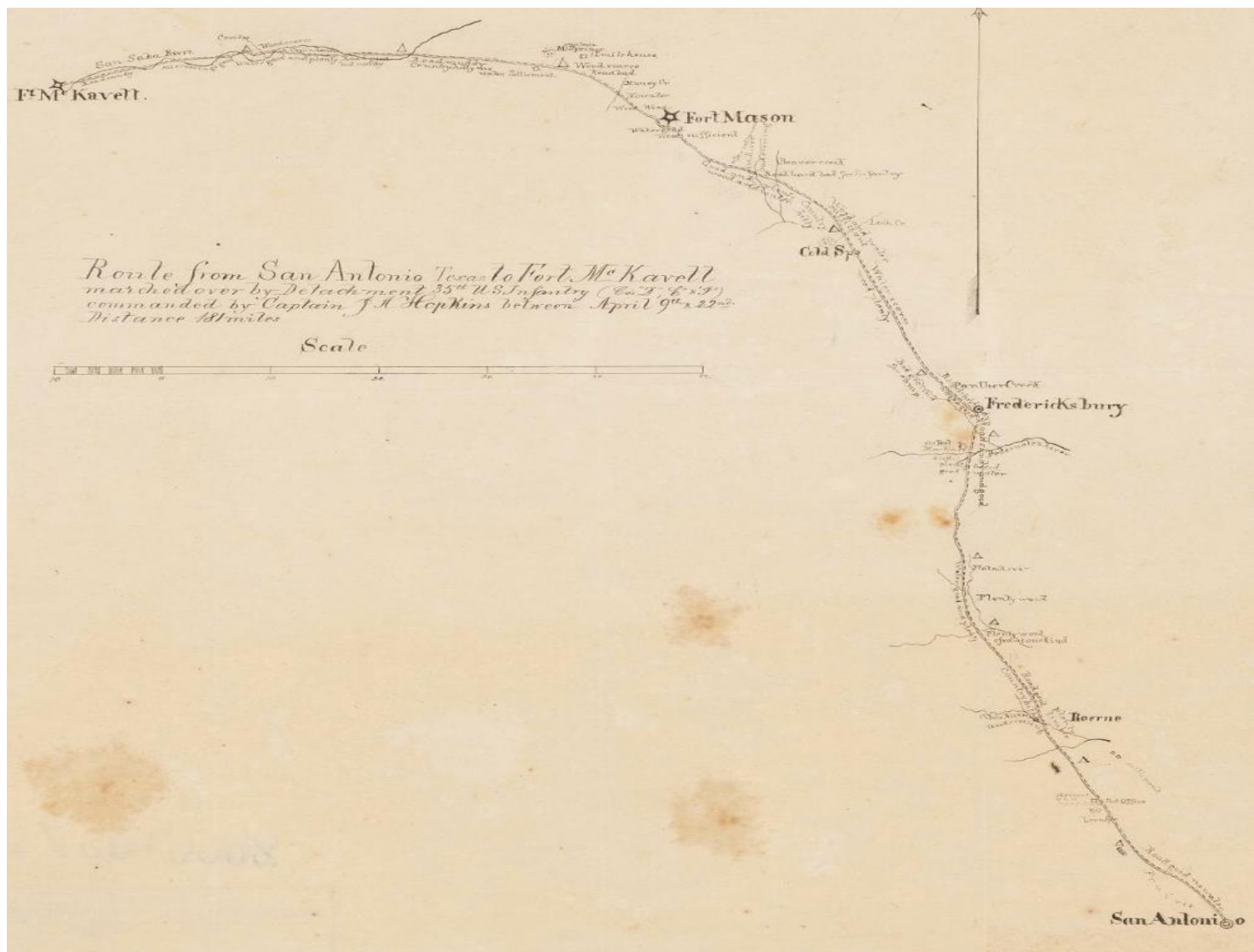
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Primary Source Activity: Route Marched Map

Route Marched from San Antonio, Texas to Fort McKavett, map, 1860s. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu, crediting Hardin-Simmons University Library. texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph493261/m1/1/?q=fort%20mckavett (Accessed February 14, 2018).



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Fort McKavett, Texas

San Saba River.

Woodcree

McSpring

Mile house

Woodcree

Road bad

Honey Cr

Lower

Wood

Fort Mason

Water sufficient

Beaver creek

Cold Sp

Loch Cr

Scale

10 20 30 40 50

Route from San Antonio Texas to Fort McKavell
 marched over by Detachment 35th U.S. Infantry (Co's B, E & G)
 commanded by Captain J. H. Hopkins between April 9th & 22nd.
 Distance 181 miles

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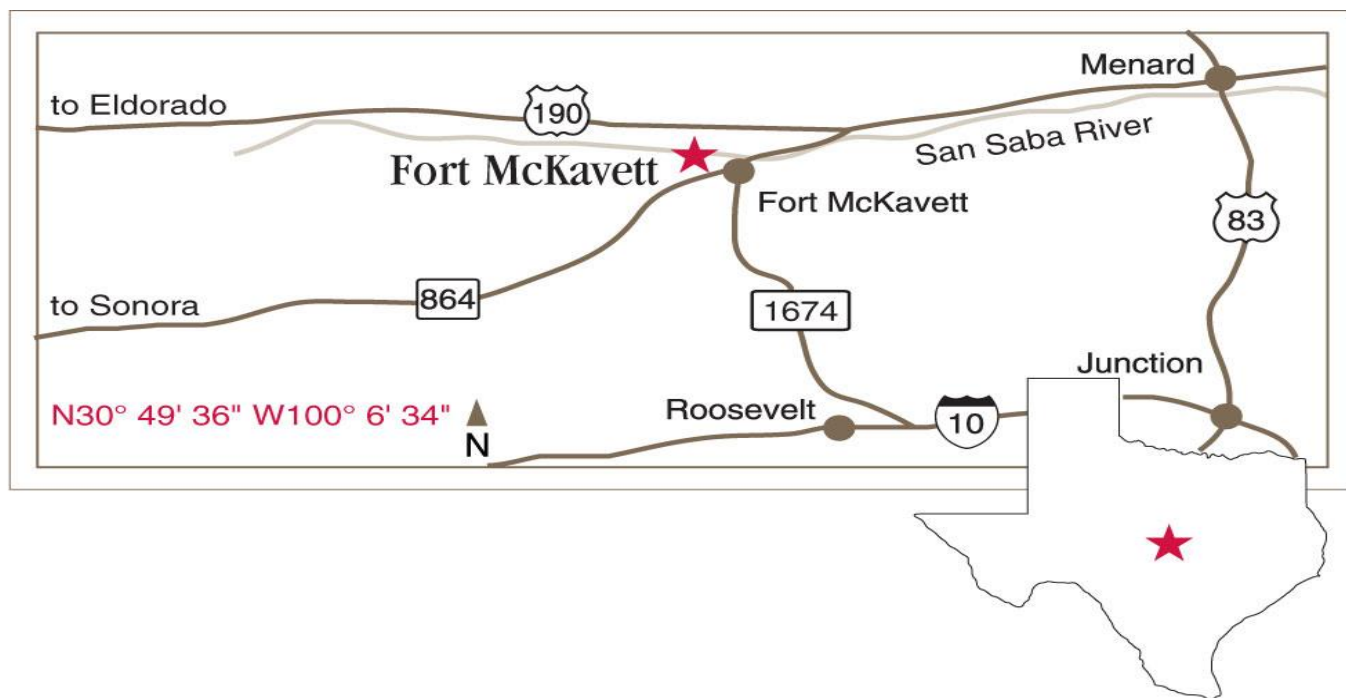
Site Visit Recommendations

- Complete the pre-visit lesson or other introductory lessons prior to your field trip.
- Divide students into small groups, each with an adult chaperone.
- Make sure students bring pencils. Pens and markers are not allowed in the exhibits.

Information

To schedule a site visit field trip for your students, please call 432-836-4391, or complete a reservation form on our website.

For admission prices and hours of operation, please visit us online at <http://visitfortmckavett.com>.



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